

Foster Care Review Board Utilization/Activity Report For the Month of March 2011

Important Considerations: The number of reviews conducted each month may be impacted by the following:
1) not filling two review specialist vacancies - one due to anticipated budget cuts in 2011 and one due to the 2009 special Legislative session budget cuts, 2) challenges created by the implementation of the child welfare reform, 3) holidays, and 4) staff vacations.

Current Month Statistics

	Reviews in Current Month	Goal for Current Month*	Percent of Monthly Goal Reviewed*	Reviews Year to Date	Goal for Year to Date*	Percent of YTD Review Goal Completed*
Children reviewed	429	375*	114%*	1,207	1,120*	108%

*The goal is based on current staffing levels. Since the economic downturn began the FCRB has lost 1 supervisor position, 3 support staff positions, and 5 review specialist positions, and recently has not filled 2 vacancies, thus the FCRB is unable to review all children. A plan is being developed to potentially conduct more reviews; however, due to continuing documentation issues, this likely will not be implemented until the second half of the year at the earliest.

Additional information on children reviewed this month:

IV-E Children Reviewed	181 (42%)	Children age birth-five	151 (35%)
Non IV-E Children Reviewed	248 (58%)	Children age six to 18	278 (65%)

Point in Time Statistics

Total children in out-of-home care on March 28, 2011 4,408 children
Children who had been in out-of-home care 6 months or longer 2,888 children

Subtotals of those in care 6 months or longer→	Reviewed in the last 6 months	1,949	(67%)
	Reviewed, but not in last 6 months	449	(16%)
	Not reviewed	490	(18%)

Facts regarding the 490 children not reviewed:

Age breakdown: 49 children are age 0-5, 71 children are age 6-12, 370 children are age 13-18

DHHS office/area of the children not reviewed:

2 are from Beatrice	19 are from Grand Island	5 are from Norfolk
7 are from Broken Bow	7 are from Hastings	10 are from North Platte
1 is from Center, Nebraska	19 are from Kearney	196 are from Omaha
5 are from Columbus	2 are from Lexington	54 are from Papillion**
7 are from Dakota City	113 are from Lincoln	4 are from Pender
16 are from Fremont**	6 are from McCook	2 are from Pierce
1 is from Gering	4 are from Nebraska City	8 are from York**

**DHHS offices noted above that are closing or re-organizing – This reflects current DHHS offices – due to reorganization some offices are closing or are becoming a hub office, so numbers by office from month-to-month will vary.

IV-E Status: 16 are IVE eligible , 474 are not eligible

(IV-E Eligible children include: 1 from Beatrice, 8 from Lincoln, 3 from North Platte, 3 from Omaha, and 1 from Papillion)

Summary of Director's Meetings (additional information was or will be provided in Director's updates)

Work with Senators: During March, the Executive Director met with Senator Campbell, Chair of Health and Human Services, and members of the Appropriations Committee regarding our budget. The Director met with Senator Christensen regarding a bill he wrote. The Director also met with Senator Bloomfield, and Senator Krist. Testimony was given on LB 433 which requires oversight of child welfare contracts. Statistical information (see section on next page) was provided two Senator's offices.

Judicial Informational Meetings: The Executive Director met with the Chief Justice. The Director met with Judge Worden and Judge Mickey when in Scottsbluff about utilizing the FCRB's recommendations, and with Judge Piccolo and Judge Turnbull while in North Platte following up on staff being in court. The Director also met with Scottsbluff County Attorney Doug Warner. The Director continues to serve on the Supreme Court's committee on GAL issues.

DHHS and Lead Agency Meetings. The Executive Director met with DHHS CEO Kerry Winterer and Director Todd Reckling. The Director had a meeting with each of the Lead Agency Directors. The Director, Program Coordinator, and Lincoln Supervisor were invited to speak at a program for lead agency personnel. The Director continues to serve on the Partner's Council.

Meetings with Casey Foundation. The Executive Director met with Casey Foundation representatives who are working with DHHS on a number of system improvements. They were interested in how we tack children and what a review document looks like. They arranged for a follow-up meeting between the Executive Director and Administrative Coordinator and a Casey representative on ways to maximize IV-E dollars for the state.

Meetings on specific case concerns. The Executive Director and Omaha Supervisor met with a GAL to discuss case concerns. The Executive Director also met with DHHS administrators on a case from the panhandle involving serious medical concerns.

Management meeting. The Executive Director continued to meet with the individual members of the FCRB management team (coordinators and supervisors). A formal meeting of the team was also held to continue coordination of the work of the agency.

Work to Ensure Children's Safety (additional information was or will be in Director's updates)

Court attended. Staff attended court on 59 cases involving 113 children during March. In 45 of the 59 cases the board's concerns were addressed by the judges. The Board's recommendations were introduced in 37 cases where the recommendation had not been previously introduced into the record. There is a difference in judicial interpretation of whether the court can accept the Board's recommendation report on its own motion. Once a court has established how reviews are conducted and has established staff professional expertise (often through having our staff present in court), courts generally accept the recommendations report without an attorney introducing the report into the evidence.

Joint staffings with DHHS and/or lead agencies. Staff and/or supervisors staffed 47 individual children's cases involving serious issues with DHHS and/or Lead agencies in March.

Additional calls, emails, letters, meetings. During March the review specialists and/or their supervisor made 88 extra contacts to ensure that issues identified on a child's case were addressed. This consisted of additional calls, emails, letters, and/or meetings.

Typical issues discussed in joint staffings or additional contacts included inappropriate permanency objective, placement changes proposed that were not in the child's best interests, issues obtaining services, length of time in care, inadequate preparation for adult living for older youth, lack of sibling contacts, and other issues affecting safety, permanency, or well-being.

Facility or foster home visits. There was 1 foster home visit for 2 children in March. Two facility tours were conducted in March.

Team meetings. 9 cases were brought to an 1184 team meeting in March. During March the Review Specialists attended 6 family group conference/team meetings to discuss case issues on behalf of children.

Staff meetings. The Director, Coordinators, and Review staff and supervisors participated in a video conference to discuss currently identified issues in the system and how those issues are impacting workloads.

Summary of Staff Collaborative Efforts (additional information was or will be in Director's updates)

Through the Eyes Meetings: In March, both Supervisors and 2 Review Specialists attended a total of 3 meetings of a Through the Eyes of a Child collaborative team. These meetings include Judges, GALs, prosecutors, DHHS, lead agencies, educators, and other regional stakeholders.

CQI Team Meetings: Supervisors and the Program Coordinator continued to meet with partners/stake holders, and lead agencies statewide and serve on CQI teams look at issues. A web-cam is being used in the Lincoln office to meet with the Central Service Area administration when face-to-face meetings are not practicable.

Meeting with Lead Agency Quality Control Personnel. The Data Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Administrator Coordinator, Supervisors, and selected FCRB staff met twice with the Lead Agency's Quality Control Directors to clarify expectations regarding documentation and answer questions regarding the lack of documentation form that review specialists are completing. Procedures were refined for reporting back to the lead agencies when there is a lack of documentation in the physical or computer records for children's cases.

Other Meetings. The Lincoln supervisor attended the DHHS Central Service Area meeting in March. The Lincoln Supervisor also attended the Lancaster County Treatment Team Meeting. Five review specialists attended a total of six team/family team meetings in March. The Omaha Supervisor presented at a CASA meeting, and met with DHHS resource development staff.

Special Requests Received

Seven special requests were received on nine children. Reasons for the requests for review or assistance included safety concerns, parental compliance issues, school issues and service delivery issues.

Cases internally flagged for action

As part of the data entry process, nine cases were flagged for special action, such as scheduling for review early. Issues include immediate placement concerns, safety concerns, services being provided, and medical issues of the child.

Statistics Requests

During March there were two requests for statistics other than those in the annual report, not including persons using the website to obtain statistics. The Foster Care Closet requested some statistics on the number of children in out-of-home care, and Senator Utter asked how many children were currently in out-of-home care in the state.

In February Senator Council's office had requested information on children in out-of-home care prescribed psychotropic medications. This information was compiled and sent to the Senator in March.

Administration and Support

The Data Coordinator assisted the Director in tracking legislation and drafting testimony for legislative hearings, and provided testimony on LB 433. (An updated list of the status of legislation will be provided the State Board prior to the May 5, 2011, meeting).

The Data Coordinator continued to provide statistics and lists from the tracking system for staff and non-staff usage. The Data Coordinator arranged for the annual backup of the tracking system needed for pulling statistics for the annual report. The Data Coordinator attended the first meeting of the Partner's Council Subcommittee on Data.

The Administrative Coordinator worked with State Board members on improving the State Board Orientation documentation. The Administrative Coordinator met with State Personnel staff for: 1) an orientation regarding the Talent management system, 2) regarding updates to the State's Accounting system and 3) regarding upcoming open insurance enrollment for staff.

The Administrative Coordinator and Administrative Staff continued to track children and their outcomes, process notifications and recommendations, and assure payroll and accounts payable were processed. The Administrative Coordinator continued to supervise case assignment, payroll, and accounting.

The Program Coordinator continued to supervise and assist the Review Specialist Supervisors.

Trainings

No trainings were provided or attended in March. The Program Coordinator obtained the sites for the summer training programs.

Personnel

One staff member had an anniversary date in March.